

HARBINGERS OF SPRING

All Signs May Fail, But When the Shad Begin to Run Winter Is Over.

VAST FLOCKS OF WILD FOWL

Lower Chesapeake Resting Place of Myriad Bodies of Birds. Fishermen Go to the Waves.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)
NORTOWN, VA., March 19.—The long looked for shad, in all his adorable fatness, is about to materialize in these waters, and with his advent all the natural phenomena follow in regular routine.

The springtime migration of the large flocks of aquatic birds, which seek northern latitudes for the summer season, is now at its height, and affords interesting spectacles to the novelists. The very prevalent idea of the utter destruction of game birds receives quite a reverse on beholding the vast flocks of these birds on their journey. Nearly every variety of water fowl is to be seen, the chief attraction in the procession being the beautiful swan. One who has never seen these beautiful snow-white birds cannot realize their delicate lines and magnificent plumage. The lower waters of the Chesapeake are literally alive with these feathered beauties, as many as five hundred in a flock being a very common occurrence. Large flocks of geese and ducks, great aggregations of wild fowl, the stork-billed coot and the long-jointed moorhen in the great procession of feathered life.

—THE SHAD. GANNETT.
More closely allied with the shad than any of these is a rather rare bird, little known to the general public, and seldom seen even by those who seek his haunts. This rare specimen of the water-fowl is the shad gannet, and a right royal bird he is. This stranger is of the species of fish hawk, eagle-shaped, being nearly as large as the great bald eagle of American fame. His plumage is light gray, the enormous wings being tipped with white. The spread of the wings is extremely large, measuring four and one-half to five feet across on very ordinary specimens.

The gannet has claws toes like a large gull, a long, sharp bill like a loon, and an enormous mouth and throat, to which is attached a large gullet, like the pelican. It sits on the water like a gull, either alone or in flocks like geese. It is voracious, and lays claim to having the largest body in the shade when in quest of its particular prey, the shad, on which it mostly subsists. Old fishermen gladly welcome the gannet, as he never makes a mistake in locating the fish, and is never seen unless it be during the shad season, following the fish as they travel north.

The manner in which the bird catches his prey is quite peculiar and very picturesque. Ascending to probably anywhere from seventy-five to one hundred feet in the air, he pauses for a moment as still as a statue, and then shoots downward with the speed of a rifle ball to a depth oftentimes of fifty feet or more, and goes up to the luckless shad which chances to have engaged his attention.

He never misses a chance, stays under the surface two minutes at a time, and when he returns to the fish has disappeared in the natural knapsack which nature has provided.

RIDGE LITTLE KNOWN.

Fishermen who have followed the water for a lifetime show great ignorance of the strange gannet, and in this whole section only one man had ever had one in his hands to examine, and that case was due to one of them committing self-destruction by choking itself between pound poles. As to getting a shot at one of them, the man doesn't live that has ever succeeded in bagging one.

But a very few of the birds have as yet been seen here; they will become more plentiful in April and disappear during May.

Steeped in a great deal of the various superstitions that surround ordinary mortals, the good fisher-folks have some whims peculiar to their own. One of the superstitions, in direct connection with the shad, which plagued the daily lives of our ancestors, was the sign of the common earthworm, which denoted the presence of the fish.

When the fisherman had gotten his nets in order he patiently and calmly watched the operations of the anglerworm to advise him when to set them. When the jumble, wary, repulsive reptile began house cleaning, and piled the superfluous grains of sand in a systematic heap around the entrance to his home, the time was opportune, and the fisherman lost no time in getting himself in shape for the shad.

This adyce has the additional honor of being absolutely reliable, and those who believe it are staunch admirers of the sagacity of one of the lowest things that inhabit the earth.

CLAMS HIGH.

Clams are bringing higher prices among the buyers than have ever been dreamed of in this country. The meek and lowly, but wily, quite eloquent bivalve, is bringing 50 cents per hundred with prospects for still higher figures. Generally the price of clam ranges from 18 to 22 cents; 30 cents, which was paid in the latter part of last season, being considered quite an anomaly. As a matter of fact, clams are exceedingly scarce, which may possibly be something of an incentive to the fancy figures.

Local supplies of both oysters and clams are woefully slim, and causing no end of worry for the patient farmer and his more patient stock. This scarcity is due in a great measure to the terrible winter now possibly past, and stock of all kinds have fared rather common. With their best endeavors, farmers cannot catch up with the pace of the feeding month.

Oyster planters, especially those who make a specialty of barrel stock, have fared rather better than usual during the season now drawing to its close. The stock has been fat and rather above the average, bringing better prices than in ordinary years. The season has been quite extraordinary one.

BIG POTATO PLANTING.

Inquiries among the truckers elicit the fact that potatoes are being more generally planted than usual, and of greater acreage than usually allotted by the individual. They seem to pin their faith



Take a Look

at our large and most complete assortment of groceries before you buy elsewhere. If it is your hobby to save money, a glance over our prices will prove we encourage it.

We will sell for one week more National Biscuit Company Crackers, 10c packages for 8c; 10c packages for 4c. Following is a list of same:

Best American Granulated Sugar, per pound.....	4½c
Clothes Pins, per dozen.....	1c
Best Quality Canned Salmon, four cans.....	25c
Herrings, N. C., per dozen.....	\$2.75
1½c. Rye, per 1-2 barrel.....	
Try—Our Green or Mixed Butter.....	30c
Pure Honey, two packages for.....	25c
Small Navy Beans, per quart.....	8c
Chipped Beef, one-half pound cans, three for.....	25c
Fresh Soda Crackers and other Snaps, per pound.....	4½c
Lion Coffee, per pound.....	11c
Rival Gelatine for.....	5c
Prepared Buckwheat, per package.....	10c
Two Cans of California Apples, per quart.....	25c
Karsten Syrup, quart, 8c; one half gallon, 15c; gallon.....	29c
Canned Tomatoes, good quality.....	5c
Scooch Herrings, per box.....	18c
Timothy Hay, hundredweight.....	85c
White Linzol Toilet Soap, three to box.....	10c
Octagon Shape Soap, eight bars for.....	25c
Bon-Ton Cherries, five to package.....	5c
Boston Baked Beans, large three-pound cans, best, two pounds each.....	4c
Meat, best, Dudson, per peck.....	65c
Chewing Tobacco, Plum, Peach, and Sun Cured and all popular brands, three for.....	25c
Large Irish Potatoes, extra quality, three pounds for.....	30c

Zu Zu, per package..... 4c
Unche Milk, per package..... 8c
Butter Thins, per package..... 12c

Graham Wafers, per package..... 12c
Social Tea, per package..... 12c
Oat Meal Crackers, per package..... 12c
London Cream Crackers, per package..... 12c
Unceda Gingers, per package..... 12c

Cheese Sandwiches, per package..... 12c
Banquet Wafers, per package..... 12c

White A. Sugar, six pounds for..... 25c
Beet Sugar, large cans, per can..... 7c
Arbuckle's Coffee, per pound..... 12c

Seven pounds of Large Lump Starch, per pound..... 25c

Clover Hay, per hundredweight..... 80c

Table Peaches, large cans, two for..... 25c

Mountain Roll Butter, fresh, extra quality, per pound..... 15c

Starch, large lump, per pound..... 4c

Pure Leaf Lard, best quality, per pound..... 10c

Whole Sweet Pickles, quart..... 10c

Large Irish Potatoes, extra quality, three pounds for..... 30c

Jefferson Spring Wheat Flour 36c bag, or \$5.75 bbl.

Shredded Coconut, new, two pounds for..... 25c

Mountain Valley Whiskey, Old Rye, gallon..... \$2.00

Dowdy Sausage, per pound..... 5c

Whiskies, Gibson XXXX, or Mount Vernon, Old Rye, per quart bottle..... 75c

Smithfield Hams, small, per pound..... 15c

Baker's Chocolate, per cake..... 15c

Quart Jars Apple Butter, Jelly and Syrups..... 10c

Good Five-String Brooms..... 20c

Old Sardines, per box..... 4c

Preserves, homemade, put up in jars, round and square..... 30c

Imperial Brand Lima Beans, California, four pounds for..... 25c

Large boxes Mustard Sardines for..... 7c

Large kit New Mackerel, per pound..... \$1.00

7 pounds New Virginia Buckwheat for..... 25c

Tea Dust, per pound..... 18c

New N. C. Herrings, cleaned, three dozen for..... 25c, or 8¢ per bar..... \$2.50

Green Rio Coffee, per pound..... 10c

Snowflake Flour, patent family, per barrel..... \$5.25, or per bag..... 33c

Silver King Flour, best on the market, per barrel, \$5.75, or per bag..... 36c

Mason jars, per dozen..... 10c

Good Rye Whiskey, per gallon..... \$1.50

to an extraordinary demand caused by the present pending conflict between Japan and Russia. The idea seems to be that the white potato is a bona fide necessity of war stores, and will consequently command high prices, the market being scarce of old stock even now.

The young ladies of Lebanon Christian Church are endeavoring to prepare for a grand Easter celebration on Easter Sunday. The programme selected is quite a fine one.

Mrs. H. H. Stuyker, living near Grove, has decided to engage in the cultivation of violets for the aesthetic trade and tastes of Northern and Western cities. The experiment will be closely watched by the surrounding neighborhood.

The past week has been quite a specimen of genuine March weather, rain, sleet, sheet and snow, forming a strange mixture, with sunshine and balmy southern breezes all on the same day.

Mr. George C. Wahright, a former York county man but now a prominent oyster packer of Norfolk, was here during the week, attending to legal business in which he is interested.

FISH ARE RUNNING.

Talk of Establishing a Business School in Northern Neck.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

HEATHSVILLE, VA., March 19.—Fish are beginning to run well in the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, and the fishermen are at last getting their traps into place. Very few herring have been caught yet, but they are bringing fancy prices. A few shad have appeared in the rivers, and these are selling off to 75 cents apiece.

There has been some talk lately of establishing a business school in the town of the Northern Neck. If such a school should be established, it would prove a great benefit to the people of this section, as large numbers of the young people have to go to the large cities to attend college.

Nothing definite has been heard of the whereabouts of Mrs. M. B. Beale, who disappeared from her home near Avalon a few weeks ago, but it has been learned that she took steamer Calvert at Trify for Baltimore.

It is reported here on good authority that a stock company is being formed at Lewisburg, this county, to build a marine railway. This enterprise will prove a great blessing to the boat owners of that section.

Work has recommenced on the old Methodist Protestant Church, which was bought last fall by a merchant tailor of Cape Charles, for a clothing store.

The Anti-Saloon League of White Stone District held its regular meeting in Weems' Drug Store on Tuesday evening.

Now that all the ice has disappeared from the rivers, the steamers are beginning to run on scheduled time, and the rivers are covered with sail vessels, plying between this section and Washington.

Mainly About People.

Endorsed Roosevelt.

(By Associated Press.)

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., March 19.—The Republican congressional convention of the Ninth District met here to-day and named Dr. J. W. Hughes and Julius W. Dillard as delegates to the national convention with J. H. Montgomery and N. L. Wilson as alternates. J. T. Blakemore was chosen presidential elector. Roosevelt's administration was endorsed.

The final decision of the committee was a suspension of Mr. Weaver until the meeting of the West North Carolina Conference, which convenes next November, when his case will come up for trial.

Captain R. A. Miller, a Civil War veteran and member of the Legislature in 1868-70, is dead. He was present at the famous and dreadful Capitol disaster, when sixty were killed and one hundred and twenty hurt.

It is currently reported here that Hon. B. J. Wyser, late secretary of the Virginia State Corporation Commission, has about completed the organization of a fire insurance company, to be known as the Imperial Insurance Co., with its home office in this town. It is understood that Mr. Wyser has associated with him Mr. Mont Clark, of Russell county, and a number of Eastern capitalists. The capital stock of the company will be \$100,000, with \$100,000 in cash plus fund. Tazewell already has one fire insurance company, and another besides the Imperial is being organized here, to be known as the Old Dominion Insurance Company.

One of the new features is a numerical list of telephones, which has long been needed in Richmond; another is the directory of householders, arranged by streets. Many other improvements have been made and much has been spared to make the publication complete and thoroughly up to date. The circulation has also been increased about a hundred copies.

Red-Hot Game.

What was considered a red-hot game of baseball was played by McGuire's and Hitchcock Academy Friday afternoon. The score was 15 to 8 in favor of McGuire's. The stars in the game were Winston, Boyd, Young, Robins, Jones and Cutshaw.

For Stuart's Monument.

Secretary W. Ben Palmer reports the appended sums received for the Stuart Monument Fund during the past week:

Mrs. P. H. Mayo, city, \$25; G. A. Duveneck, \$10; Charles W. Sleper, \$5; Mrs. W. J. Johnson, \$3; Mrs. D. C. Richardson, treasurer, O. M. Association, \$10; Veteran Cavalryman, H. Total, \$36.

House cleaning time has come—read the T. D. WANTS for help, and you will not have to work yourself to death.

Spring moving is here—read the T. D. WANTS columns for baggage and furniture movers.

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE.

Major Howard Better.

Chief of Police Howard, who has been confined to his room, will be more independent for about two weeks, was able to be up a little while yesterday.

MISS ELLA PAULINE MORRISS.

"Silver Seal" is the title of a delightful story of thrilling romance by Miss Virginia Bayard, of Roanoke. The authoress has dedicated it to one of Virginia's fairest daughters, Miss Ella Pauline Morris, of Buckingham, whose picture is given above. Miss Bayard's story is laid in the Blue Ridge and is quaint, pathetic and fascinating from beginning to end. The story is now ready for the press. The authoress is a young lady of talent and bids fair to take her place in the brilliant galaxy of Virginia writers.

Miss Morris, to whom she dedicates the work, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Garland Morris, of Sutton, Va.; also the granddaughter of the late Charles Y. Morris, of Richmond, known as "the Shoestring Millionaire," because of his eccentricity of wearing a shoestring for a watch chain when his fortune was rated at a million.

It is understood also that Miss Morris figures prominently as one of the characters in "Silver Seal."

MISS ELLA PAULINE MORRISS.

Laufmann & Co.

Fourth and Broad Sts.

IS NOT GOING TO EUROPE